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## ABSTRACT

This report focuses on the essential need for statewide higher educational activities, regardless of the agency or agencies involved in this effort, and discusses in the introduction some of the issues that make it particularly urgent at the present time. The first section of the report makes recommendations intended as guidelines for drafting federal legislation related to the support of comprehensive statewide planning for postsecondary education. These include substantial and continuing matching fund commitments to each state engaged in a comprehensive planning effort, to be allocated to the state agency legally responsible for this effort, which in turn would administer the funds and have the right to allot part of these funds to other appropriate agencies engaged in planning. Section II of the report is concerned with the responsibilities of the states in support of effective statewide planning and makes recommendations to be used by the states in carrying these out. These include: financial commitment, a planning agency, widespread participation in the planning effort, and realistic budgets for planning. Section III discusses the types of planning essential on a statewide level and calls attention to the difference between the strategic and tactical phases of planning. Section IV deals with the need for effective coordination and governance. (AF)

# COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

## A Report of the TASK FORCE ON STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

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### Introduction:

The primary responsibility for effective planning for postsecondary education, public and private, rests with the states. The need for such planning is constant. To be effective, it must embrace the full spectrum of postsecondary educational activities — short-term occupational education, community colleges and technical institutes, four-year institutions, and graduate and professional schools. This constant need is particularly acute at the present time as a result of a number of factors not all of which are mutually complementary. Among these factors are:

1. The apparent scarcity of resources for further support and expansion of postsecondary education at state and national levels.
2. The increasing emphasis on public accountability for all forms of education and postsecondary education in particular.

3. The apparent imbalance of educational products and manpower needs including an apparent present oversupply of certain types of highly educated manpower and an undersupply of others.

4. The aggravated financial plight of many private higher educational institutions.

5. The resistance of many taxpayers and legislators to increase taxation.

6. General acceptance at the national and state levels of the goal of equality of postsecondary educational opportunity commensurate with individual ability, need, and interest for all citizens regardless of economic status.

7. The increasing emphasis upon postsecondary occupational education as a viable alternative to more traditional modes of higher education.

8. The emergence of new and more sophisticated informational and management tools

\* Resigned task force membership due to heavy commitments, December 1970.

for postsecondary educational institutions and systems.

9. The continuing public concern and uneasiness related to campus unrest.

10. The increasing recognition of the desirability of institutional and programmatic complementation rather than duplication and competition.

11. The basic need for a rational sense of direction.

Statewide planning is a relatively recent phenomenon in postsecondary education. From a handful of statewide agencies charged with such planning in 1960, the recognition of the need has grown to the point where some 46 states now have legislatively authorized agencies with statewide planning as one of their primary functions.

This report is not addressed to the problems of governance or coordination of higher education nor does it recommend a type of governance or coordination as being particularly conducive to effective planning. Rather, the report is addressed to the essential need for statewide higher educational planning regardless of the agency or agencies in individual states charged with the responsibility.

The report recognizes that federal legislation, inevitably, has an impact upon such planning, and may either reinforce or weaken statewide planning. Accordingly, the first section of the report is concerned with federal responsibility to reinforce statewide planning as basic to the national interest and to the health, even survival, of the kind of pluralistic and diversified yet complementary postsecondary educational complex of institutions that promises to meet the needs of the states, the nation, and the citizens in the period ahead.

The second section of the report is concerned with the responsibilities of the states in support of effective statewide planning. It calls attention particularly to needs for comprehensiveness in statewide planning, for adequate representation and involvement in the planning process, and for continuity and adequacy of funding for the planning effort.

The third section is concerned with the types of planning essential on a statewide level and calls attention to the difference between the strategic and tactical phases of planning. Recognizing that one of the constraints on planning is the structure in which it occurs in the various states, the report calls attention to the additional need to provide a periodic review and evaluation of the context of planning by a group or agency external to the planning agency itself.

## Section I: The Federal Responsibility.

The following recommendations are intended as guidelines for drafting federal legislation related to the support of comprehensive statewide planning for postsecondary education.

*Recommended: That the federal government make a substantial and continuing matching (but not necessarily equal) fund commitment to each state which has a legally authorized comprehensive statewide planning process for postsecondary education, including both public and nonpublic institutions. Compelling reasons for adoption of this recommendation include:*

1. The need to control costs induced by federal as well as state support for postsecondary education before they are incurred.
2. The need to establish sound comprehensive planning on which plans for postsecondary educational support may be based.
3. The need to coordinate federal plans with state objectives for postsecondary education.
4. The need to encourage the states to carry out their responsibility for postsecondary education by putting the prestige and commitment of federal leadership behind the concept of comprehensive statewide planning.
5. The need to support states willing to undertake comprehensive planning as demonstrated by their prior commitment of funds to the process and to encourage other states to follow their example.
6. The need to meet the rising widespread demand for postsecondary educational services adequately and equitably.
7. The need to back the stimulation of educational activity by the federal government with comprehensive planning to assure that objectives are achieved.
8. The need to anticipate the possibility of federal block grants to the states for support of postsecondary education and ease the conflict resulting from the changing relationship between state, campus, and federal support.

*Recommended: That federal funds for such planning be allocated to the state agency legally responsible for general comprehensive planning for postsecondary education. Compelling reasons are:*

1. Only the state has responsibility for comprehensive planning for all sectors of postsecondary education. The state needs to retain control of the comprehensive planning process to assure adequate and equitable planning for all institutions and sectors of the educational establishment.

2. The funds need to be allocated directly to the agency to assure reasonably independent relationships with other statewide planning groups.

*Recommended: That federal funds allocated for state planning and administration of various postsecondary categorical grant programs be administered by the designated comprehensive planning agency. Compelling reasons are:*

1. Isolated planning in connection with categorical grant programs of substantial nature can result in conflicting plan objectives.
2. Coordinating the planning for categorical grant programs with comprehensive planning increases the probability of harmonious and amplified impact of all federal programs in the state.
3. The federal government will continue categorical grant programs and these programs will likely include planning dollars.
4. Administration of categorical grant program planning by the statewide agency may provide equity for the smaller institution and weaker sectors of education which do not have strong influence with granting agencies.
5. Channeling planning resources to the statewide agency begins to provide the necessary means to coordinate institutional and state plan objectives.

*Recommended: That a portion of the federal funds allocated to the comprehensive planning agency may be allotted to any appropriate agency or institution for the purpose of aiding in formulating and implementing a statewide plan. Compelling reasons are:*

1. Involvement is the key to acceptance and implementation of plans. This approach would allow dollars to go to any state agency whose role or expertise would enhance planning or whose involvement would enhance implementation. Central accountability would be retained.
2. Institutions and other agencies could thus have a hand in developing the state plan.

## **Section II: The State Responsibility.**

From its review of higher educational statewide planning concepts and activities, the Task Force formulated the following summary observations:

1. In spite of the rapid development of coordinating and governing boards in the states over the last decade, the states have not realistically addressed themselves to the problems of long-range planning.

2. This has been reflected particularly in the lack of adequate financial support at the state level for planning efforts.

3. This situation has been further complicated by a lack of mutual reinforcement in common planning between institutions and the planning agencies.

4. The weakness to date in many statewide planning efforts calls for reevaluation of approaches and exploration of new approaches and alternatives in planning and governance for the near future.

5. In planning, far more attention needs to be paid to qualitative improvement in contrast to quantitative enlargement.

6. The need for effective planning that encourages all forms of postsecondary education (public and private, short-term occupational programs through graduate and professional programs) needs to be more carefully understood.

Further, it is becoming increasingly important to relate postsecondary educational planning to elementary-secondary education in the total responsibility of the state and federal governments for the range of educational opportunity.

Based upon our study and these observations, the Task Force makes the following recommendations:

1. That each state recognize the overriding importance of comprehensive statewide planning for postsecondary education by making a continuous and identifiable financial commitment to it, allocating such funds to the agency legally responsible for coordinating postsecondary education. If no such agency exists, one should be created.
2. That this agency consider comprehensive planning its primary function, attempting insofar as possible to keep a separate focus on planning as distinct from its operating activities.
3. That the planning process include widespread participation (e. g. citizens, state officials, faculty, students, administrators) in order to obtain all possible input and to develop the broadest possible base of support for the implementation of the plan.
4. That the governor and legislature establish budgets and deadlines for comprehensive planning which realistically reflect the costs and time necessary for broad participation.
5. That the planning agency be responsible for making the plan operational by overseeing the implementation of recommendations and by helping to maintain a high level of institutional and public understanding.



6. That planning be recognized as a meshing of educational aspirations and political realities. If goals are too Utopian, they may not be implemented; if goals lack vision, their implementation is unimportant.

7. That the state view comprehensive planning as a strategy for the establishment and optimum achievement of educational goals within the context of potential resources and not primarily or solely as a cost-saving device.

### Section III: The Comprehensive Statewide Planning Process for Postsecondary Education.

Effective substantive planning for postsecondary education requires use of certain planning concepts which must be clearly understood by state political leaders as well as those of education. Part A of this section briefly delineates the most important of these concepts. Part B provides a framework for the evaluation of the structure and process employed by the state to conduct substantive planning.

**A. Substantive Long-Range Planning for Postsecondary Education.** Substantive planning for the development of education (both for numerical increases when necessary and for quality and improvement of process at all times) should be carried on by the agency or agencies legally authorized to conduct statewide planning. Whatever the arrangement, at minimum postsecondary education requires a single comprehensive and coordinated planning effort. That effort should be characterized by both strategic and tactical stages in order to produce comprehensive planning.

**1. STRATEGIC PLANNING.** Strategic planning provides the framework within which tactical planning is developed and implemented. It is subject to few changes (if any) between major planning cycles and ought to reflect the fundamental assumptions about postsecondary education, the long-range societal objectives and goals, and the principal missions, roles, and functions of all educational institutions and agencies.

**2. TACTICAL PLANNING.** Tactical planning takes place within the parameters of strategic planning. Its elements include short- and intermediate-range goals, developmental time frames, and step-by-step means for achieving strategic goals. Tactical planning may be concerned with any element of postsecondary education, including such diverse items as new campus sites, new programs of instruction, research and public service, student grants and aids, building programs and priorities, budget formulas and processes, and management systems. Care must be exercised to insure that when tactical decisions

amend or void strategic concepts all interested parties are fully cognizant of such proposed changes and are given public opportunity to debate their desirability. Tactical planning is a continuous process with one cycle overlapping or following immediately upon the previous one. Each cycle normally focuses on a limited set of issues and problems which have high priority. No attempt should be made to rewrite the whole comprehensive plan during each tactical cycle.

**3. PLANNING PERSONNEL AND PROCESS.** Comprehensive planning is a continuous and cumulative process which should be undertaken by the ongoing coordinating agency, using its regular planning staff and advisory groups plus whatever use of additional experts is required. Of utmost importance is the extensive use of experts from institutions and the outside world as well as heavy involvement of citizens and representatives from various interest groups. Institutional planning capabilities also should be strengthened and used fully in planning activities. It is the efficacy and efficiency of the process used in planning which assures ultimate acceptance and implementation of recommendations. However reasonable and imaginative the substantive recommendations may be, the planning process used chiefly determines the amount of understanding and concurrence in the plan.

**B. The Evaluation of the Context for Planning.** A major difficulty in substantive planning for higher education has been the preoccupation of those involved with the products of their work and their often uncritical acceptance of the existing context for planning. Thus, periodically it is necessary to go outside the existing structure and process in order to obtain an impartial evaluation of their continuing viability under changing conditions.

This assessment can best be made by an ad hoc group of persons legally and even emotionally free to examine and make recommendations to the governor and legislature on the specific agencies and institutions which are to be responsible for statewide planning.

The group should be composed of lay members representing broad state interests rather than the specific interests of the existing organizations and institutions of education. Persons from the latter types of agencies should be used on task forces and advisory panels to the primary lay group. The members of the ad hoc group should be selected in such a manner as to assure executive and legislative confidence in the group. The director and staff of the ad hoc group should be exempt from normal personnel policy regulations for hiring and salary. Some members of the staff of the ongoing planning board(s) should be used by the evaluating group to insure necessary liaison with ongoing planning. Ad hoc specialists, either in-state or out-of-state, also should be used as appropriate.